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SUBJECT: UZBEKISTAN: BORDER SECURITY ASSESSMENT

REF: a) SECSTATE 107424

CLASSIFIED BY: PROHASKA, STEVEN N.; (B), (D)

(U) The following assessment of border security in Uzbekistan responds to reftel in order to facilitate a coordinated, multi-year planning process for border security assistance in Central Asia.

¶1. (C) Summary. Several U.S. programs--including the Export Control and Related Border Security program, the International Narcotics and Law Enforcement program, and others sponsored by the Department of Defense and Department of Energy--have contributed to enhancing the security of Uzbekistan's borders. Government of Uzbekistan officials have repeatedly expressed gratitude for U.S.-sponsored training activities, and equipment deliveries in particular, that have improved their ability to detect and interdict items of proliferation concern, as illustrated by at least five GOU interceptions of radioactive material across Uzbekistan's borders since 2000. Uzbekistan also benefits from cooperation with selected other countries and international organizations, such as the European Union's Border Management in Central Asia program. Uzbekistan's interest in enhancing the security of its borders and increasing the efficacy of border management appears to stem from persistent concerns about narcotics and terrorism emanating from Afghanistan as well as a desire to bring additional revenue into the country through cross-border commerce. Recent increases in the number of shipments across Uzbekistan's borders and a desire to avoid delays in processing these also may lead to increasing receptivity to border cooperation with the U.S. Furthermore, engagement with Uzbekistan to improve the country's ability to manage its borders effectively may serve mutual interests including enhancing regional security, promoting economic growth, and combating transnational crime and proliferation. Regular, periodic training of personnel from Government of Uzbekistan entities involved in border security also would be beneficial given frequent rotations of these personnel. End summary.

Topography, State of Uzbekistan's Borders

¶2. (U) The borders of double-landlocked Uzbekistan cross through a wide range of terrain. The Kyzylkum Desert covers much of Uzbekistan's central-northern border with Kazakhstan. Uzbekistan's western border with Kazakhstan runs through the Ustyurt Plateau, which is largely flat but broken in places by mountain ridges. Part of Uzbekistan's northwestern border crosses the rapidly receding Aral Sea. River valleys lie in the southern part of the country near Turkmenistan, and parts of several mountain ranges as well as plains dominate the eastern parts of Uzbekistan that border Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan.

U.S. Border Security Programs in-Country

¶3. (C) EXBS: The Department of State's Export Control and Related Border Security (EXBS) Program has been active in Uzbekistan since 2001 and has provided training and equipment worth over 30 million USD to several Government of Uzbekistan (GOU) ministries including the Border Guards of the National Security Service, State Customs Committee, Ministry of Defense, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Emergency Situations, and Ministry of Health. EXBS assists these agencies with detecting, deterring, and interdicting illicit trafficking in weapons of mass destruction, their delivery systems, related technologies, and other weapons. The program comprises many types of nonproliferation export control assistance,

from licensing and legal/regulatory technical workshops to provision of nonproliferation-related equipment and training. EXBS activities in Uzbekistan ground to a halt in the spring of 2007 following the GOU's arrest and beating of one of Post's FSNs. EXBS projects enjoyed a modest rebound in 2008 as the bilateral political relationship improved. The Embassy delivered ten radioisotope identification devices to the Higher Military Customs Institute in June 2008. A mobile X-ray van previously delivered to Customs was repaired with EXBS funds and cooperation from the Government of Kazakhstan in August 2008. Officials representing several ministries in the Government of Uzbekistan participated in an export control workshop in Washington D.C. in September 2008. As of late October, officials in the Government of Uzbekistan had signaled interest in greater engagement with EXBS and receptivity to Commodity Identification Training related to nuclear, chemical, biological, and missile-related items.

¶4. (SBU) DOE/DTRA: The Department of Energy (DOE) took over responsibility this year for maintaining 27 radiation portal monitors on Uzbekistan's borders that were installed by the Defense Threat Reduction Agency's (DTRA) Weapons of Mass Destruction-Proliferation Prevention Initiative. Radiation portal monitors are maintained at the following points of entry by DOE's Second Line of Defense program:

Tashkent Province: Gisht Kuprik, Navoi, Yallama, Tashkent International Airport, Tashkent International Airport - Cargo, Oybek, Keles rail, Nazarbek rail, Bekabad rail

Andijon Province: Dustlik, Karasu

Bukhara Province: Alat, Khodjadavlet

Surkhandarya Province: Ayritom vehicle, Ayritom rail, Saryasya

Karakalpakstan: Karakalpakiya rail, Khodjeyli, Daut-Ata

Samarkand Province: Jar-Tepa

Ferghana Province: Andarkhan

Jizzax Province: Gagarin

Namangan Province: Uch-Kurgan

Ferghana Province: Ferghana

Syrdarya Province: Malik, Ak-Altin

Kashkadarya Province: Track 154 (Karshi) Rail Crossing

¶5. (SBU) INL: The Department of State's International Narcotics and Law Enforcement (INL) program's primary current border security assistance activity in Uzbekistan is a project to upgrade security and interdiction capabilities at the Termez River Port. INL funds this project, but the United Nations Office of Drugs and Crime implements it. Funds intended for a Border Liaison Office project that the GOU rejected this year have been diverted toward the Termez River Port project. Ministry of Internal Affairs (MVD) officers from the exit-entry division also have received INL-funded trafficking-in-persons training over the past year.

¶6. (SBU) DOD: In early 2007, the Department of Defense sold the Government of Uzbekistan fourteen patrol boats to promote the security of the Amu River, part of which runs along Uzbekistan's southern border with Afghanistan. The Border Guards Termez Riverine Squadron maintains and operates these boats, and DOD conducts annual training on the use of these craft. Training includes basic small craft maneuvering, maintenance, shallow river patrolling techniques, night patrolling, interdiction techniques and radar-assisted patrolling. The Border Guards also participate in yearly Marshall Center seminars on border security and counter-narcotics operations. Post's Defense Attaché Office and Office of Military Cooperation also are investigating the possibility of providing Customs with RAPISCAN scanning equipment in response to a request from the State Customs Committee. In September 2008, narcotics interdiction was added to the primary missions of the Ministry of Defense. The Ministry has since requested aerial surveillance means to assist interdiction on Uzbekistan's rugged border with Tajikistan.

Internal Coordination of Programs

¶7. (SBU) Post coordinates the activities of U.S. assistance programs through meetings of the Law Enforcement and Security Assistance Working Group (LESAWG), an interagency body chaired by the Deputy Chief of Mission with representatives from the Political-Economic Section, Defense Attaché Office, Defense Threat Reduction Office, and Regional Security Office, and relevant TDYers. The group meets periodically to review the status of ongoing law enforcement and security assistance programs--including border security--and to discuss upcoming plans.

External Coordination of Programs

¶8. (SBU) Post officers involved in border security assistance coordinate on an informal basis with other relevant countries, international organizations, and multilateral/intergovernmental entities. Multilateral entities such as UNODC, Europa House, and the OSCE sometimes host donor coordination meetings at which representatives of foreign Embassies and international organizations coordinate their plans.

Major and Minor Points of Entry and Border Crossing Points

¶9. (SBU) The Government of Uzbekistan informed Post via diplomatic note in early December that it would not respond to Post??'s request for responses on border security-related questions, including information on the names, locations, and condition of major or minor points of entry/border crossing points in Uzbekistan.

Modular Shelters

¶10. (SBU) In 2006-2007, EXBS Uzbekistan focused its attention on the production, delivery, and assembly of Modular Shelter Complexes for remote border locations in Uzbekistan. EXBS staff conducted a series of assessments of remote border locations and consulted with the Portal Monitoring Project in Uzbekistan and with the Border Guards. EXBS, in collaboration with INL, modernized the following border crossing points: Ming-Tepa, Keskaner, Dustlik, and Shavat. Post does not have plans for additional work related to modular shelter complexes in Uzbekistan at this time.

Government of Uzbekistan Agencies Operating at the Borders

¶11. (C) Several Government of Uzbekistan agencies operate at the country's borders. A representative of the European Union's Border Management in Central Asia program told us on October 30 that four or five agencies can be represented at individual border crossing points. The Border Guards of the National Security Service and the State Customs Committee typically have a presence here, and representatives of the Ministry of Health and Ministry of Agriculture also are sometimes present. The Border Guards are the key state agency responsible for border protection in Uzbekistan and regulate passenger movement. The State Customs Committee is responsible for the regulation of cargo flows. Customs officials have told us that their priorities include combating the smuggling of narcotics, weapons, and dangerous substances; ensuring the security of Uzbekistan's borders; and improving the service's technological sophistication.

Other Agencies Involved in Border Security

¶12. (C) Uzbekistan's Institute of Nuclear Physics (INP) and Ministry of Emergency Situations lack a permanent presence at border crossing points, but also are involved in border security when instances of radioactive materials smuggling arise. One of the Institute's primary objectives is to prevent the transit of radioactive materials across Uzbekistan's borders. INP teams of at least three personnel visit the 27 points of entry outfitted with radiation portal monitors four times per year to conduct preventive maintenance and to train Customs officials at these checkpoints. (Comment: INP does not, however, have 24-hour coverage of Uzbekistan's points of entry due to personnel shortfalls, so the potential exists for a delayed response to interdictions of radioactive materials. End comment.)

Training and Equipment Wish Lists

¶13. (C) GOU entities involved in border security have asked for a range of equipment and training assistance from the United States. Recent commentary from Customs officials suggests relatively greater interest in equipment deliveries, though Customs has been appreciative of both equipment and training opportunities and has requested both. In November, Deputy Customs Chairman Rustam Mansurov requested that the U.S. deliver additional scanning equipment that would help Uzbekistan to efficiently process the increasing number of shipments transiting the country's borders. One senior Customs official noted on September 30 that training and seminars are good, but technical equipment increases Customs' effectiveness multiple times. In August, Customs requested training that would help it to maintain an X-ray van provided by EXBS, as well as a more sophisticated computer system for the van and additional rechargeable batteries. This summer Customs officials asked for additional communications equipment. Mansurov also indicated in April that Customs is keenly interested in training opportunities and telecommunications equipment to support the maintenance of Uzbekistan's radiation portal monitors. In December 2007, Border Guard officials requested all-terrain vehicles for mountainous areas and tents that could protect their personnel from the elements. Senior MOD officials have told U.S. counterparts they are interest in acquiring Unmanned Aerial Vehicles (UAVs) to assist in monitoring Uzbekistan's borders with Afghanistan and Tajikistan.

Border Security Training Institutions

¶14. (C) The State Customs Committee's Higher Military Customs Institute opened in 2003 and offers three kinds of training: a standard four-year program; three-month training courses; and refresher training for experienced personnel. A state-of-the-art facility that provides instruction to about 500 students and has benefited from over 250,000 USD in U.S.-provided equipment, the institute graduated its second class this summer. The Customs curriculum includes an 80-hour training course intended to familiarize Customs officials with radiation issues. The duration of each training week also has recently been extended from 36 hours to 48 hours. Some of the training is computer-based and uses UNODC-developed software.

¶15. (C) Customs' National Canine Training Center has become a regional center for the World Customs Organization and has begun training officials from Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, Iran, Mongolia, and Turkmenistan.

Border Security Assistance Efforts of Other Countries, Organizations

¶16. (C) Customs officials have told us that Customs cooperates with a variety of organizations including the Asian Development Bank (ADB), the Shanghai Cooperation Organization (SCO), the United Nations Development Program, and Technical Aid to the Commonwealth of Independent States, with one official complaining that cooperation with some of these organizations has been confined primarily to talks and negotiations. Customs also has an agreement with France on precursors control and canine training. As a member

of the World Customs Organization (WCO), Uzbekistan has agreements with 25 other countries. Uzbekistan also has received limited amounts of equipment from Japan's International Cooperation Agency, including about 200,000 USD in equipment including notebook computers, video cameras, lanterns, and flashlights. The United Nations also has provided Uzbekistan with equipment, but the amount of equipment Uzbekistan has received from other countries is not as significant as what it has received from the United States.

¶17. (C) The Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe has been active in assisting the GOU with law enforcement training institutions and has expressed interest in expanding its profile. The GOU, however, has consistently kept the OSCE at arm's length and often delays project proposals. Nevertheless, OSCE recently constructed a new wing at the MVD's training academy that includes classroom space and training materials.

¶18. (SBU) The Central Asia regional headquarters of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) is based in Tashkent. UNODC serves as a coordination body for projects that the United States and other countries contribute to, and has enjoyed fruitful cooperation with Uzbekistan on several projects including completion of the Hayraton Border Facility.

¶19. (SBU) The European Union is one of the key entities involved in border security assistance in Uzbekistan. The European Commission initiated the Border Management in Central Asia (BOMCA) program in 2002. The United Nations Development Program (UNDP) implements BOMCA for the European Commission. BOMCA has a Country Office in Tashkent with four national staff and one European Chief Technical Advisor. BOMCA in Uzbekistan works with five parts of the GOU involved in border management: the Border Guards of the NSS, State Customs Committee, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Health, and Ministry of Agriculture.

¶20. (SBU) In late September, BOMCA provided a set of documents outlining the organization's activities in Central Asia to participants at a border management conference in Astana. Recent BOMCA activities in Uzbekistan have included the establishment of an interagency working group for the introduction of Integrated Border Management (intra-service, interagency and cross-border cooperation between Central Asian border management agencies); a study tour to Europe for Directors of Training Centers and Dog Training Centers to learn more about modern border management and training methodologies; the establishment of Drug Profiling Units (DPUs) at Tashkent international airports and Keles railway stations, and trainings for DPU staff; construction/renovation of training facilities for the Border Guards and the handover of a Training Center in Termez to Uzbekistan in May 2008; advocating new BG training curricula for integrated border management based on EU practices; a train-the-trainers course for the staff of border training academies; the introduction of interagency training in Bukhara and Ferghana; the provision of common software and training in intelligence analysis for law enforcement representatives; construction/renovation of border infrastructure, including Border Posts Mamyk and Sokh, which have been handed over to the Border Guards; renovation of border crossing points Vuadil, Madaniyat, and Sariosiyo; plans to complete construction of the border crossing point Tynchlik in the Ferghana Valley by December 2008; the provision of equipment to Border Guards and Customs officials at border crossing points Karasu, Sariosiyo, Gisht-Kuprik, Ozbek, Hayraton, Daut-Ata; Tashkent and Bukhara International Airports; training of staff involved in border control, interagency cooperation, vehicle and passenger search techniques, intelligence analysis and risk profiling, and precursor detection; the provision of dogs and regional three-month training sessions for dog handlers at the National Canine Training Center in Tashkent; the introduction of cross-border workshops involving relevant law enforcement agencies for intelligence-sharing and the development of cross-border dialogue; and the Organization of Skills Training at international border crossing points along the trade and transit corridors where infrastructure or equipment or both have been provided.

Comment:

¶21. (C) Uzbekistan's interest in enhancing the security of its borders and increasing the efficacy of border management appears to stem from persistent concerns about narcotics and terrorism emanating from Afghanistan as well as a desire to bring additional revenue into the country through cross-border commerce. Recent increases in the number of shipments across Uzbekistan's borders and a desire to avoid delays in processing these also might lead to gradually increasing receptivity to border cooperation with the U.S., though problems with information-sharing on the GOU???'s part??as demonstrated by the GOU???'s unwillingness to answer questions related to this assessment??may persist. Furthermore, engagement with Uzbekistan to improve the country's ability to manage its borders effectively may serve mutual interests including enhancing regional security, promoting economic growth, and combating transnational crime and proliferation. Regular, periodic training of personnel from Government of Uzbekistan entities involved in border security also would be beneficial given frequent rotations of these personnel.

NORLAND

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